

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL MEETING

Washington County Fair Park Pavilion
3000 County Highway PV
Polk, Wisconsin

June 15, 2005

3:00 p.m.

Present:

Excused:

Commissioners:

Thomas H. Buestrin, Chairman
William R. Drew, Vice-Chairman
Anthony F. Balestrieri
Robert A. Brooks
Richard A. Hansen
Kenneth C. Herro
Gregory L. Holden
Kenneth F. Miller
Allen L. Morrison
James E. Moyer
Adelene Robinson
Daniel S. Schmidt
Linda J. Seemeyer
David L. Stroik
Paul G. Vrakas
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

Leon T. Dreger
Lee Holloway
Leonard R. Johnson
Michael J. Miklasevich
Anselmo Villarreal

Absent:

Staff:

Philip C. Evenson
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

Guests:

William J. Mielke
Tom Sackett
Evie Vrakas

President and CEO, Ruekert & Mielke, Inc.
Washington County Supervisor

ROLL CALL AND WELCOME

Chairman Buestrin called the 209th meeting of the Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Mr. Evenson indicated for the record that Commissioners Dreger, Holloway, Johnson, Miklasevich, and Villarreal had asked to be excused.

WELCOME

Chairman Buestrin recognized Mr. Miller for welcoming remarks. As Chairman of the Washington County Board of Supervisors, Mr. Miller welcomed the Commission to Washington County, and in particular to the Washington County Fair Park site and Fair Park Pavilion. Mr. Miller indicated that the County is very proud of the Fair Park site, noting that the Washington County Fair, one of the largest in the State with attendance in 2004 over 110,000 persons, was first held on this site in 1999. He noted that the facility is in year-round use, accommodating many different types of events and activities. He invited the Commissioners to take a brief tour of the Fair Park site after the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2005, MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Mr. Drew, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of March 2, 2005, were approved as published.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Presenting for Mr. Hansen, Mr. Evenson noted that a copy of the report had been provided to all Commissioners for review at the meeting. In commenting on the report, he called attention to the following items:

1. Based upon disbursements through May 15, 2005, it is projected that total disbursements for the year will approximate \$7.39 million. Revenues are projected at \$7.54 million.
2. The total amount of funds held by the Commission in the various operating, liability, and reserve accounts approximates \$3.51 million. The various accounts are identified on the second page of the report.
3. As of May 15, 2005, the Commission had in investments and cash on hand about \$5.26 million. About \$3.90 million are invested in the State of Wisconsin Local Government Pooled Investment Fund. As of May 15, 2005, that fund was yielding 2.67 percent interest. Other funds are held in savings and checking accounts at the Johnson Bank and in certificates of deposits at several banks throughout the Region.

There being no discussion, on a motion by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Morrison, and carried unanimously, the Treasurer's Report for the period ending May 15, 2005, was approved (copy attached to Official Minutes).

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Research Committee

Noting that the Planning and Research Committee had met once since the Commission Quarterly meeting on March 2, 2005, Committee Chairman Schmidt reported the following items:

On June 2, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the sanitary sewer service area for the City of Muskego. That area is tributary to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the City and involves the addition of about 33 acres of land to the service area. Of that total, about 8 acres consists of secondary environmental corridor. The remainder of 25 acres will be developed for about 40 residential units.
2. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the sanitary sewer service area for the Village of Paddock Lake. The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the Village and involves the addition of about 81 acres of land to the service area. Of that total, about 23 acres constitute environmentally significant land. The developable portion of the site will be for residential use, accommodating about 400 residents.
3. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the sanitary sewer service area for the City of Hartford. The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the City and involves the addition of about 224 acres of land to the service area, including about 34 acres of environmentally significant lands. The remainder of about 190 acres will be developed for residential use to accommodate about 370 housing units, adding a population of about 900 persons to the service area.
4. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the sanitary sewer service area for the Caddy Vista Sanitary District in the Town of Caledonia. That area is tributary to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the Caddy Vista Sanitary District and involves the addition of about 180 acres of land to the service area. Except for about 9 acres of environmentally significant lands, the area will be developed for residential use to accommodate about 100 housing units. In addition, about 15 acres are to be removed from the presently defined service area.
5. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the Waterford-Rochester sanitary sewer service area. That area is tributary to the Western Racine County Sewerage District (WRCSD). The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the District and involves the addition of about 92 acres of land to the service area. Of that total, approximately 35 acres consists of primary environmental corridor and 57 acres in agricultural use. The 57 acre developable portion is proposed to accommodate about 30 housing units.
6. Reviewed and acted to recommend to the Commission for adoption an amendment to the regional water quality management plan pertaining to the New Berlin sanitary sewer service area. That area is tributary to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). The amendment, scheduled for action later in this meeting, was requested by the City and involves the addition of about 24 acres of land to the service area. A new elementary school is proposed to be built on the site to replace two existing elementary schools. The Committee's recommendation was made subject to the Commission receiving a report today on the results of a public hearing, on any comments that might be forthcoming from MMSD, and on any action taken by the New Berlin Common Council.

7. Reviewed and approved for publication Chapter 2 of SEWRPC Planning Report No. 50, **A Regional Water Quality Management Plant Update for the Greater Milwaukee Watersheds**. This chapter comprehensively describes the planning area.
8. Reviewed and approved for publication Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 of SEWRPC Planning Report No. 51, **A Wireless Antenna Siting and Related Infrastructure Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin**. These chapters present an introduction, basic principles and concepts, objectives and standards, and selected inventory findings.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Vrakas, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Planning and Research Committee report was approved.

Administrative Committee

Noting that the Administrative Committee had met three times since the Commission Quarterly meeting on March 2, 2005, Committee Chairman Vrakas reported the following items:

On March 31, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Reviewed and approved the Commission disbursements for three financial reporting periods: Year 2005 Nos. 4, 5, and 6, extending over the period February 7, 2005, to March 20, 2005.
2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending March 20, 2005. With nearly one-quarter of the year completed, the projections indicated a year end surplus of nearly \$500,000, a figure that is expected to decline as the year goes on.
3. Reviewed and approved the 2004 Audit Report prepared by certified public accountants from the firm David L. Scrima, S.C. The Audit Report indicated that the Commission had a year end fund equity balance of about \$ 3.16 million, up from \$ 2.99 million at the end of 2003. The auditors found no material weaknesses in the Commission's internal fiscal control procedures.

On April 28, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Reviewed and approved the Commission disbursements for two financial reporting periods: Year 2005 Nos. 7 and 8, extending over the period March 21, 2005, to April 17, 2005.
2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending April 17, 2005. With about 30 percent of the year completed, the projections indicated a year end surplus of \$472,000.
3. Authorized the Commission staff to retain the certified public accounting firm of David L. Scrima, S.C., to conduct the audit of the Commission's calendar year 2005 operations.
4. Received a report that the Commission staff had accepted a bid from Jefferson Pilot Financial to carry the Commission's long term disability insurance program for two years.
5. Received a report that the Commission staff had sold over the eBay internet service, both the John Deere Gator and the Loadmaster Trailer that had been acquired five years ago to help meet a contractual obligation in Walworth County concerning the re-monumentation of section and quarter section corners. With the completion this spring of that work program, these items were no longer required. Together this equipment had an acquisition cost of \$9,837. With the addition of \$152 in

listing costs on eBay, the Commission had a total investment of \$9,989. The combined selling price of the two items was \$7,575, leaving the Commission with a net five-year cost of \$2,414.

On May 26, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Reviewed and approved the Commission disbursements for two financial reporting periods: Year 2005 Nos. 9 and 10, extending over the period April 18, 2005, to May 15, 2005.
2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending May 15, 2005. With nearly 40 percent of the year completed, the projections indicated a year end surplus of about \$132,000, reflecting a substantial decline in anticipated service agreement revenues in the floodland management program area. These revenues, while secure in terms of signed agreements, likely will not be earned until 2006.
3. Reviewed and approved a series of budget assumptions for calendar year 2006 proposed by the Commission staff. One assumption would have the Commission modestly increase its regional property tax levy by about 0.66 percent. This increase would raise an additional \$15,500. Other assumptions include Federal and State revenues in 2006 for transportation and water quality planning purposes slightly below the levels in 2005; an assumed increase in service agreement revenues of about \$97,000; and a full-time staffing level of 76 persons, four fewer than 2005. The proposed budget will be considered later in this meeting.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Drew, and carried unanimously, the Administrative Committee report was approved.

Executive Committee

Noting that the Executive Committee had met three times since the Commission Quarterly meeting on March 2, 2005 Chairman Buestrin reported the following items:

On March 31, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Received and approved a report from the Administrative Committee relative to its meeting that day.
2. Reviewed and approved four contracts for planning and related work. The details pertaining to these contracts are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
3. Recommended approval of three applications for Federal grants or loans as being in conformance or not in conflict with the regional plans prepared by the Commission. The details pertaining to those applications are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
4. Approved the creation of a Technical Advisory Committee to guide the conduct of the regional water supply study. The Committee will be chaired by the Commission's Executive Director Emeritus, Dr. Kurt W. Bauer, and will begin work by mid-year.
5. Approved a staff proposal relative to the allocation of work tasks for the regional water supply study. The SEWRPC staff, under the direction of Deputy Director Kenneth R. Yunker, will provide overall project management of the study and perform much of the work. Certain work tasks will be carried out by others, including a consulting civil engineering firm, a consulting lawyer, and consulting expertise available through the University of Wisconsin system.

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6. Authorized the Commission Chair to enter into an annual contract extension with the Commission's Executive Director Emeritus.
7. Received a report that the Commission's grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to fund a bioretention stormwater runoff treatment facility for the Commission's parking lot had been approved and funds will be forthcoming. The staff was directed to pursue the parking lot expansion and renovation project and report back to the Executive Committee before accepting the proffered grant funds and proceeding with the project.
8. Received a report that a local funding contingency plan had been put into place to fund the 2005 orthophotography program should previously programmed Federal transportation funds not be forthcoming.
9. Authorized the Executive Director to develop an enhanced educational program for local plan commissioners and local elected officials in the Region, working in conjunction with other groups and organizations who are interested in such a program.

On April 28, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Received and approved a report from the Administrative Committee relative to its meeting that day.
2. Reviewed and approved four contracts for planning and related work. The details pertaining to those contracts are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
3. Recommended approval of eleven applications for Federal grants or loans as being in conformance or not in conflict with the regional plans prepared by the Commission. The details pertaining to those applications are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
4. Approved a set of amendments to the 2005-2007 Regional Transportation Improvement Program involving 18 highway projects under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.
5. Authorized the Executive Director to indicate to two non-profit organizations – The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Walks – that the Commission would serve as the public sponsor for Federal grant applications to be submitted by these two organizations. In both cases, the non-profit groups will use Federal funds to promote alternative forms of transportation to the automobile. Assuming favorable funding decisions, the two projects would be conducted over all counties in the Region except Walworth County. As the public sponsor, the Commission would be responsible for oversight and disbursement of all funds. This authorization was given on the condition that, should these projects be funded, the Executive Committee will review contracts between the Commission and the organizations prior to execution.
6. Received a report that the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration had provided the Commission with the final report that recertifies the Commission as the metropolitan planning organization for three more years. A summary of that report was given at the March Quarterly meeting.
7. Authorized the Executive Director to inform land conservancy organizations working in the Region that the Commission will undertake, as soon as possible, a work effort to update the Regional Natural Areas Management Plan. That plan has proved to be very useful and helpful not only to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the county and local governments, but also to a

growing number of private sector organizations whose focus is on preserving and protecting environmentally significant lands.

On May 26, 2005, the Committee took the following actions:

1. Received and approved a report from the Administrative Committee relative to its meeting that day.
2. Reviewed and approved eight contracts for planning and related work. The details pertaining to those contracts are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
3. Recommended approval of 15 applications for Federal grants or loans as being in conformance or not in conflict with the regional plans prepared by the Commission. The details pertaining to those applications are set forth in a table included with the agenda for this meeting.
4. Authorized the Commission Chair to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Chicago Area Transportation Study and the Illinois and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation relative to coordinating land use and transportation planning across the Wisconsin-Illinois State Line. This agreement formally recognizes the coordinative efforts that have taken place for many years on an informal basis.
5. Approved an amendment to the 2005-2007 Regional Transportation Improvement Program that would enable the Social Development Commission of Milwaukee County to secure Federal funds to operate a loan program for low-income families for the purpose of purchasing automobiles as a means to get to work.
6. Received a report that work continues toward the advancement of the proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Line (KRM). Acting as agent for a cooperatively created Steering Committee, the Commission is securing Federal and State funds to conduct supplemental planning and environmental assessment work. That work will be accomplished largely through a consultant team to be selected early this summer. The Commission staff is also working with the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) who has taken the lead to help identify local funding sources for the proposed commuter rail service. The GMC group will seek State Legislation to establish a three-county Regional Transit Authority.
7. Received a report that the Commission staff will shortly release a request for qualifications (RFQ) in connection with the selection of a civil engineering firm to help carry out the regional water supply study.
8. Received a report that a formal proposal to perform the County Surveyor function throughout the Region over the period 2006-2010 has been prepared and is in the process of being presented to, and considered by, each of the seven counties. This initiative was undertaken at the direction of the Intergovernmental and Public Relations Committee.
9. Received a report that the Commission had entered into an agreement with Mueller Communications, Inc. relative to the design of informational materials to help communicate the mission and work program of the Commission to various audiences.

There being no discussion, on a motion by Mr. Drew seconded by Mr. Morrison, and carried unanimously, the Executive Committee report was approved.

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO REGIONAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

City of Muskego Sewer Service Area (Resolution No. 2005-07)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-07, noting that the Resolution would revise the City of Muskego sewer service area. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-07, together with a copy of a SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Vrakas, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-07 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-07 attached to Official Minutes).

Village of Paddock Lake Sewer Service Area Plan (Resolution No. 2005-08)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-08, noting that the Resolution would revise the Village of Paddock Lake sewer service area plan. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-08, together with a copy of a SEWRPC staff memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Holden, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-08 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-08 attached to Official Minutes).

City of Hartford Sewer Service Area Plan (Resolution No. 2005-09)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-09, noting that the Resolution would revise the City of Hartford sewer service area. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-09 together with copy of a SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Miller, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-09 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-09 attached to Official Minutes).

Caddy Vista Sanitary District Sewer Service Area (Resolution No. 2005-10)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-10, noting that the Resolution would revise the Caddy Vista Sanitary District sewer service area. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-10, together with a copy of a SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Balestrieri, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-10 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-10 attached to Official Minutes).

Western Racine County Sewerage District Sewer Service Area (Resolution No. 2005-11)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-11, noting that the Resolution would revise the Western Racine County Sewerage District sewer service area. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-11, together with a copy of a SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Moyer, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-11 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-11 attached to Official Minutes).

City of New Berlin Sewer Service Area (Resolution No. 2005-12)

Chairman Buestrin asked the Commission to consider Resolution No. 2005-12, noting that the Resolution would revise the City of New Berlin sewer service area. He asked Mr. Schmidt to present the resolution.

Mr. Schmidt noted that all Commissioners had received for review prior to the meeting a copy of Resolution No. 2005-12, together with a copy of a SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated June 2005 documenting the proposed amendment. He recalled that the proposed amendment had been reviewed by the Planning and Research Committee at its meeting held on June 2, 2005, and was recommended for adoption by the Committee subject to a report on a public hearing and action by the New Berlin Common Council. Mr. Evenson reported that a public hearing on this matter was held on the evening of June 6, 2005, before the New Berlin Plan Commission, and that no adverse comments had been received. Based on a positive recommendation from the Plan Commission, the New Berlin Common Council adopted the amendment on the evening of June 14, 2005.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Herro, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2005-12 was approved (copy of Resolution No. 2005-12 attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF BUDGET FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2006

Chairman Buestrin noted that copies of the proposed Commission budget for calendar year 2006 had been provided to all Commissioners for review prior to the meeting, and asked the Commission to consider adoption of that budget. He then asked Mr. Evenson to briefly present the proposed budget.

Mr. Evenson then led the Commissioners through the proposed budget document, calling attention, in particular, to the following major items:

1. As shown on Tables 1 and 2, the proposed year 2006 operating budget calls for a total revenue and expenditure level of about \$7.33 million. This represents a decrease of about \$437,000, or nearly 6 percent, from the 2005 adopted budget level of about \$7.76 million. The decrease may be attributed entirely to the elimination from the 2006 budget of the regional orthophotography acquisition program. That program is funded only once every five years.
2. A number of important expenditure assumptions are reflected in Table 3. These assumptions include a staffing level of 76 full-time positions, four fewer than in 2005; salary adjustments of about 3 percent; an assumed 10 percent increase in health insurance costs, coupled with an increase in employee cost share from 17 percent to 18 percent; an assumed increase of 10 percent in retirement system costs; and minor reductions in part-time staff and Commissioner meeting fee payments. In addition, while consultant fees have been substantially reduced owing to the elimination of the orthophotography program and contracted land information system work, these consultant fees do include \$500,000 to support the regional water supply planning program. Other adjustments in expenses on Table 3 are relatively minor in extent and reflect current expenditure patterns.
3. Several important revenue assumptions are reflected in Table 4. These include the elimination of Federal and State funding to support the orthophotography program, together with a 5 percent reduction in State funds for water quality planning purposes. Major Federal and State funding for transportation planning purposes has been assumed to be the same as in 2005, although that will depend upon what the U.S. Congress and the President do with respect to the anticipated re-authorization of the Federal transportation programs. With respect to service agreement funding, the 2005 budget reflects the local funds being made available to support the regional water supply planning program, coupled with significant declines in funding for the water quality and land information programs. The budget also assumes a normal level of effort with respect to the county surveying function in 2006. Depending upon how many counties positively respond to the Commission's new initiative in this area, both the revenue and the expenditure portions of the 2006 budget may need to be adjusted accordingly.
4. The proposed budget would modestly increase the Commission's regional tax levy by 0.66 percent, or about \$15,500, to a total levy of about \$2.38 million. This increase is substantially below the increase of 2.39 percent in the regional tax base which may be attributed to new construction in the Region. Owing to the changing distribution in the equalized value in the Region among the counties, the increase in the allocation of the regional tax levy to the counties is once again highly differential and, as shown in Table 16, varies from a low of -0.15 percent in Walworth County to a high of 1.93 percent in Kenosha County. The Milwaukee County share of the levy would remain unchanged at about \$837,000, and thereby remains below the 2003 adopted budget levy of nearly \$840,000. The property tax rate would be reduced to 0.00164 percent of the Region's equalized valuation, well below the authorized rate under Wisconsin law of 0.003 percent of that valuation.
5. Tables 5 through 15 of the budget document present information relative to the anticipated program budgets in each of the Commission's functional planning areas. New this year are program budgets for water supply planning (Table 8) and telecommunications planning (Table 12). More detail with respect to budget allocation will follow later in the year when the Commission's 2006 Overall Work Program document is produced.

A brief discussion then ensued. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Herro, Mr. Evenson indicated that the decline in consultant fees reflected in the budget for the community assistance program in Table 11 should not be interpreted to mean that the Commission is cutting back in any way its normal planning oriented community assistance operations. Rather, the decline represents the end of the development era with respect to land information systems, with all counties now having completed the initial development of those systems, bringing about a concomitant reduction in contracting activities with the Commission. In addition, Mr. Evenson noted that the budget does include service agreement revenues to help the partnerships established in Ozaukee and Washington Counties to prepare comprehensive plans intended to meet the present Wisconsin "Smart Growth" law. Mr. Miller commented that Washington County had recently been informed that a grant offer relative to the "Smart Growth" planning program previously made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration would be honored, even though a recent position by the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee would eliminate the comprehensive planning mandate and the attendant State grant program. Mr. Herro commented that all parties concerned should get behind and support initiatives to regionalize the county surveyor functions through the offices of the Commission. That effort, he said, would save all counties in the Region money over the long run.

Following that discussion, on a motion by Mr. Herro, seconded by Ms. Seemeyer, and carried unanimously, the Commission's proposed 2006 operating budget was approved, and the Chairman was authorized to transmit the appropriate tax requests to the seven constituent counties (copy of 2006 operating budget attached to Official Minutes).

OVERVIEW OF FISCAL CAPACITY ANALYSIS FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Chairman Buestrin asked Mr. Evenson to introduce Mr. William J. Mielke, a consultant to the Commission and speaker at today's meeting. By way of background, Mr. Evenson noted that while Commission work program efforts do not typically focus on issues of municipal fiscal health, such issues have important implications for the overall well being and vitality of the southeastern Wisconsin metropolitan region. Since property taxes are the lifeblood of municipal government, all communities seek to have a sound and growing tax base, one that enables a community to fund day-to-day local government operations in a fair and equitable way. A widely accepted measure of municipal fiscal capacity is the amount of equalized property value per capita. During the several years that discussions in the greater Racine area were undertaken relative to execution of a much admired intergovernmental agreement, municipal fiscal capacity was at the core of those discussions. Data and analytical work carried out by the Ruckert & Mielke firm as consultant to the City of Racine clearly showed that the central city had far less municipal fiscal capacity than the adjacent communities. While some local officials held a belief at the beginning of the process that State-shared revenue had the effect of nearly "leveling the playing field" between the central city and its neighboring local governments when it came to fiscal capacity, the data presented showed that such was not the case.

Given the Racine experience, Mr. Evenson continued, he believed that it would be useful to retain the Ruckert & Mielke firm to develop a database attendant to municipal fiscal capacity for the entire region. The basic intent of the work effort, he continued, was to compute every municipality's "raw" municipal fiscal capacity, and then re-compute that municipal fiscal capacity after factoring in the effect of municipal-shared revenue from the State. He then called upon Mr. Mielke to present the results of the municipal fiscal capacity study, noting that in producing this information, the Commission was not in any way recommending changes in State policy relative to State-shared revenue, nor was the Commission recommending any particular municipal tax base sharing program. Rather, by presenting this data, local government officials in the Region can better understand the topic of municipal fiscal capacity and the way in which the State municipal aid program works. With that knowledge base in hand, Mr. Evenson continued, local officials may desire to try to influence State policy and/or collectively work together

toward helping to ensure that all communities in the metropolitan region have the appropriate capacity to take care of local government business.

Mr. Mielke then presented the results of the municipal fiscal capacity study with the aid of a slide presentation (copy of slides attached). A discussion then ensued. Mr. Vrakas indicated that he thought the study was quite useful, raising a topic of great significance to local governments. Ms. Seemeyer concurred, noting that not only are there significant disparities in municipal fiscal capacity, but that communities with the lowest fiscal capacity often have the greatest social needs, further complicating the situation. In response to a question by Mr. Hansen, Mr. Mielke indicated that a more widespread distribution of housing for lower income individuals and families would help abate disparities. The Racine area experience indicated to him that the more well off communities would rather transfer funds to less well off communities than accept lower income housing. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. Mielke indicated that the significant difference in fiscal capacity between the City of Pewaukee and the Village of Pewaukee was an important factor in the failure to implement a consolidation put forth two years ago. Fiscal capacity disparities, he continued, can be a very important barrier to bringing down local government costs through consolidation and shared service proposals. Mr. Herro commented that it is becoming very difficult to expect elected officials to effectively address areawide or regional issues given their narrow base of support. That is why, he said, the Commission should take a more aggressive posture in some of these difficult issues attendant to reducing the costs of local government. Mr. Wirth commented that issues such as municipal consolidation and more effective service delivery have to be addressed by offering better, more effective services, noting in particular the success recently achieved by Waukesha County in its consolidated dispatch center. Mr. Herro concurred, noting that local officials are frequently reluctant to give up local control to save taxpayer dollars.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Drew asked what the next logical step in this matter might be. In response, Mr. Evenson indicated that the Commission could, under the right circumstances, sponsor additional analyses that would address alternative ways in which a regional tax base sharing proposal could be structured. Mr. Hansen commented that the present discussion goes to the heart of what he believes the Commission should be about, and pointed to the need for a strategic planning session to further address questions such as this. Mr. Evenson noted that historically the Commission, with its strong ties to county government, would look to county leadership for guidance and advice on matters of strategic importance. He indicated that this matter should be given more consideration later in the year and encouraged Commissioners to discuss with their county leadership what direction, if any, the Commission should take in further pursuing this topic.

Following the discussion, Mr. Buestrin thanked Mr. Mielke for the work undertaken for the Commission and for his informative presentation. Mr. Evenson indicated that the Commission's technical report presenting the results of the study would be published later this summer.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Evenson reported that he had placed on each Commissioner's desk three pieces of correspondence that reflect well on the Commission staff efforts in carrying out the Commission's overall work program (copies attached to Official Minutes). In part, these three items speak to the breadth of that work program.

CONFIRMATION OF DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF SEPTEMBER QUARTERLY MEETING

Chairman Buestrin reminded everyone that the next meeting of the Commission has been scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 14, 2004, in Walworth County.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, on a motion by Mr. Moyer, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, and carried unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip C. Evenson
Deputy Secretary

PCE/lw
Attachments
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